



For Immediate Release
November 1, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Baghdad International Airport business development opportunities expand with convention center, office suites

By Norris Jones
Gulf Central District



Col. Robert Vasta, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District Commander (right), discusses progress of work with the Iraqi contractor renovating an eight-story structure that will feature 250 offices at the Baghdad International Airport. (USACE photo)

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Business development opportunities will soon be expanded at the Baghdad International Airport complex.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is overseeing work to convert the two former domestic terminals into a modern convention center. In addition, an eight-story structure is being remodeled

to offer 250 office spaces for lease.

"That convention center will have the capacity to handle gatherings up to 25,000 people," says USACE project engineer Matthew David. "It will include exhibition halls, offices, conference rooms, and a restaurant. We're putting in new plumbing, plastering, electrical, lighting, and air conditioning. It's located at the transportation hub of Iraq, a perfect location for such a facility." The two

former terminals are both two-story structures, one measuring 53x138 meters, the other 31x150 meters. The \$6.3 million renovation project is about 20 percent finished with a projected completion date of next spring.

Next door to the convention center is an eight-story 3,076-sq.-meter office structure. "Businesses will be able to come in and rent space as needed, from one office to several floors of offices. Work there includes new restrooms, electrical, fire protection with sprinklers, lighting, new ceilings, plastering, a new mechanical system including two 200-ton air conditioning chillers, office furniture, a lighted parking lot, and a cafeteria. "Our Iraqi contractor is definitely interested in the mission of rebuilding Iraq and is taking extra steps to ensure that the office building will meet the needs of its customers," David said. Currently that \$4 million project is about 30 percent finished with a projected completion date

of April 2008.

Majed Michel, manager of the Baghdad Business Center located between the new Convention Center and the office building, says he is very encouraged by what these new facilities will offer Iraq. "This will significantly enhance our economic development opportunities here. We're already planning our first trade show in the new convention center next spring that will focus on the oil industry. We're encouraging international companies to consider opening a satellite facility in the 'executive suites' office building here at the Baghdad International Airport. I'm very optimistic about Iraq's future," he continued.

"There are good people all over the world who I would like to encourage to visit Iraq and help us move forward. This is an historic opportunity. When you have cooperation among individuals, anything is possible." he added.

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Two former terminals at Baghdad International Airport are being converted into a modern Convention Center scheduled to open next spring. (USACE photo)



This welder is part of the work force renovating a building at the Baghdad International Airport complex. That facility will offer office space to companies interested in doing business in Iraq. (USACE photo)

Note: Norris Jones is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region Central district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact him at 544-665-2644 or email requests to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil